IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

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1. (Currently Amended) A decoding apparatus comprising:

a) an input unit, arranged to input a bitstream obtained by coding a plurality of object data in units of objects and multiplexing the coded data, wherein the plurality of object data are data which provide a desired scalability in accordance with a combination among the plurality of object data;

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b) a separation unit, adapted to separate coded data of each object from the bitstream;

~~c) a desired scalability input unit, arranged to input data indicating a grade of the desired scalability;~~

c) a judgment unit, adapted to judge permission of reproduction of the coded data and a level of reproduction-permitted scalability;

d) a control unit, adapted to perform reproduction-control according to the permission of reproduction and the level of reproduction-permitted scalability judged in said judgment unit;

~~d)~~ e) an outputting unit, adapted to decode the coded data of the object in accordance with ~~the data indicating the grade of the desired scalability~~ said control unit, and ~~outputting~~ output the decoded data; and

~~e)~~ f) a synthesis unit, adapted to synthesize the object data outputted by said outputting unit.

2. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the bitstream is a bitstream complying with MPEG4.

3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the bitstream input to said input unit is scrambled, and said input unit comprises a descrambling unit, arranged to descramble the scrambled bitstream.

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4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the bitstream includes intellectual property data that is not encoded, and said descrambling unit descrambles the scrambled bitstream in accordance with the intellectual property data.

5. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 3, further comprising a read unit, adapted to read descrambling data for descrambling the scrambled data, the descrambling data being stored in an IC card, whereinsaid descrambling unit descrambles the scrambled bitstream in accordance with the descrambling data read by said read unit.

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a read unit, adapted to read selection data for selecting the object, the selection data being stored in an IC card, and a selection unit, adapted to select the predetermined object from the plurality of objects in accordance with the selection data read by said read unit.

7. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the plurality of objects include at least a video object.

8. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the plurality of objects include at least an audio object.

9. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein the plurality of objects include at least a scene description object.

10. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a monitor unit, arranged to monitor the object data synthesized by said synthesis unit.

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a communication unit, arranged to perform data communication with an external device, said communication device transmitting, to said external device, information representing that the bitstream is decoded.

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein said communication unit performs data communication through the Internet.

13. (Currently Amended) A decoding method comprising the steps of:

inputting a bitstream obtained by coding a plurality of object data in units of objects and multiplexing the coded data, wherein the plurality of object data are data which provide a desired scalability in accordance with a combination among the plurality of object data;

separating coded data of each object from the bitstream;

~~inputting data indicating a grade of the desired scalability;~~

judging permission of reproduction of the coded data and a level of reproduction-permitted scalability;

performing reproduction-control according to the permission of reproduction and the level of reproduction-permitted scalability judged in said judging step;

decoding the coded data of the object in accordance with ~~the data indicating the grade of the desired scalability~~ said performing step, and outputting the decoded data; and

synthesizing the object data outputted in said decoding step.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program, said program comprising steps of:

a) input processing of inputting a bitstream obtained by coding a plurality of object data in units of objects and multiplexing the coded data, wherein the plurality of object data are data which provide a desired scalability in accordance with a combination among the plurality of object data;

b) separation processing of separating coded data of each object from the bitstream;

~~c) desired scalability inputting processing of inputting data indicating a grade of the desired scalability;~~

c) judgment processing of judging permission of reproduction of the coded data and a level of reproduction-permitted scalability;

d) control processing of perform reproduction-control according to the permission of reproduction and the level of reproduction-permitted scalability judged in said judgment processing;

~~d)~~ e) outputting processing of decoding the coded data of the object in accordance with ~~the data indicating the grade of the desired scalability~~ said control processing, and outputting the decoded data; and

~~e)~~ f) synthesis processing of synthesizing the object data outputted in said outputting processing.

15. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the plurality of object data includes data of different resolutions.